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RubberWorld

The technical service magazine for the rubber industry

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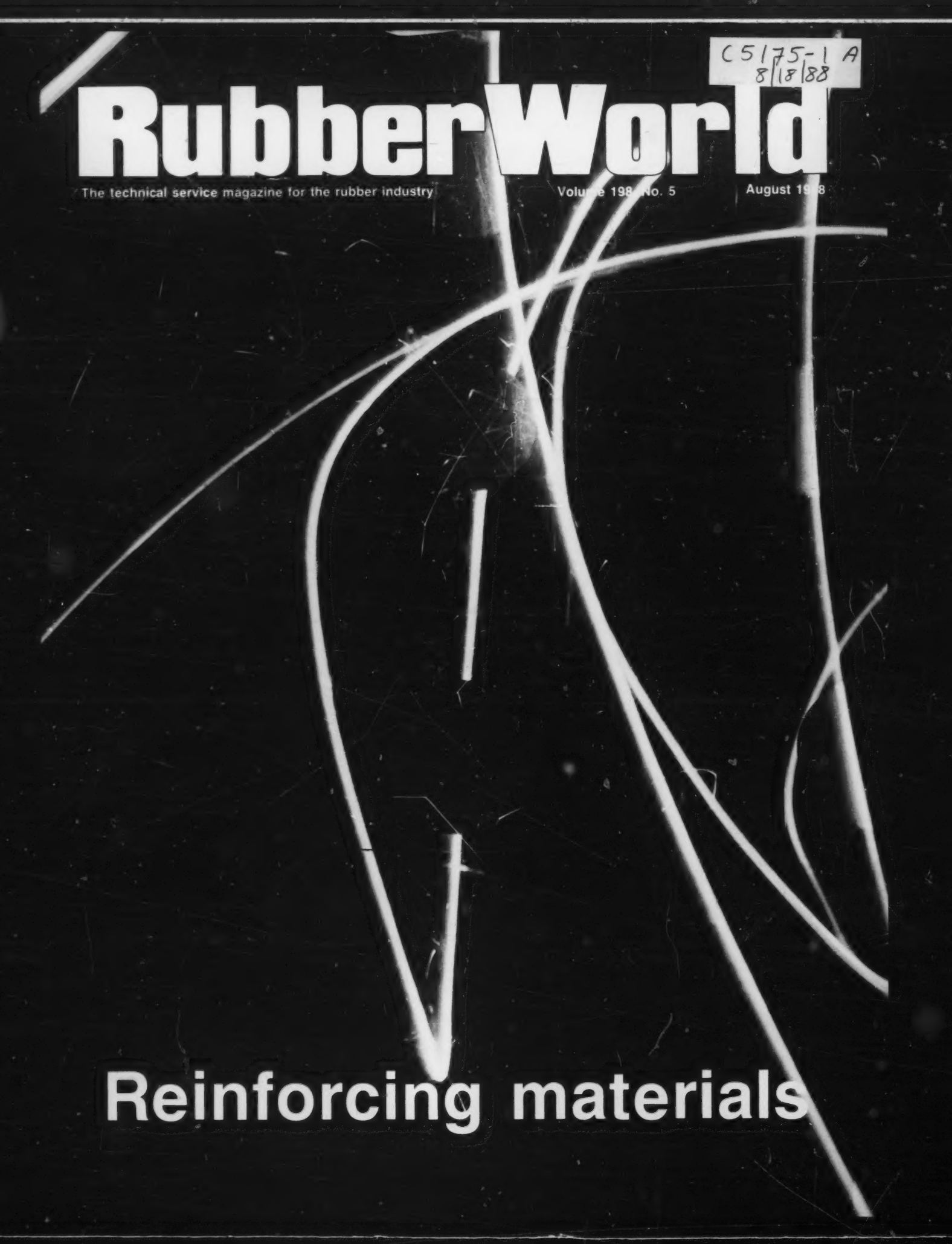

Reinforcing materials

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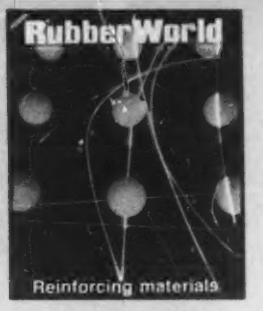
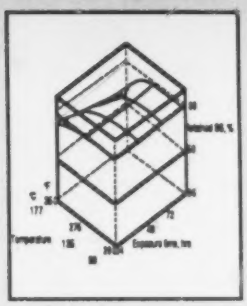


Reinforcing materials



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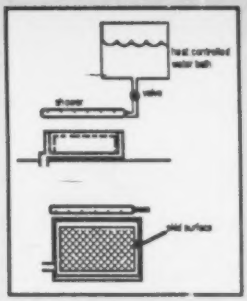

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Editorial

The U.S. political season is upon us, and this being a presidential election year, you will be informed on what you are really concerned about. Special interest groups will reveal poll after poll indicating the "mood" of the citizenry trying to somehow influence the next person to occupy 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. The candidates usually avoid getting specific on any issue. They usually have a plan of some sort. Recently we have had plans to end the Vietnam conflict, bring hostages home and return America to greatness. This year's plan will have to deal with the budget, and this is where most of the citizens cringe. When politicians start talking about money, you can bet they're after more of yours. And it seems this time around, there are all kinds of plans.

The one that bothers us the most is called the gasoline tax. It's not to be confused with the one passed in 1983 that more than doubled the tax from four to nine cents a gallon, or the ones prior. Those taxes benefitted the people using the gasoline as it was used for road construction and repair. This new tax has an altogether different purpose. It will be used to reduce the federal deficit. And they're not talking about a nickel increase this time. Some think it should rise from the present nine cents to at least $1 per gallon. The rationale being that prices for gasoline in the U.S. are relatively cheap and an increase in price would be "painless," as one advocate wrote in the *New York Times*. The reason its cheap is because during the oil crisis during the 1970s we didn't like the high prices and set about cutting consumption. Motorists started driving smaller cars, cars traveled farther distances on a gallon of gas, businesses became energy efficient and developed more efficient processes. For a reward, we're asked to cut the federal deficit through a "painless" tax.

This painless tax would hurt the rubber industry. There is no need to explain the relationship between a healthy rubber industry and the number of miles driven. There is no need for the rubber industry to bear more of the burden of the deficit since it has had very little to do with creating it. Just as the oil import fee that was trotted out a while ago was deemed a bad tax, taxes on gasoline that aren't used to improve driving conditions are worse. Not only would the 85% of all workers who commute in private motor vehicles see their paychecks erode, they would be paying more for the goods they purchase when business passes along its extra fuel costs. The rubber industry would suffer extra because it depends on a driving public for the sale of many of its products. But this form of taxation is popular because it can put a dent in the deficit and is perceived to be "painless" by some. It is anything but painless and should be dropped like the oil import tax before it. Hopefully there will be a poll showing the ugly mood of the citizenry toward this scheme and the politicians won't buy this painless assertion.

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RubberWorld

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Business Briefs

Acquisitions, expansions

Polysar will spend BF 635 million (US $18.5 million) to increase capacity for halogenated butyl rubbers at its Antwerp, Belgium plant. Capacity figures were not released. Construction is expected to be completed during the first quarter of 1990.

BFGoodrich announced the full start-up of its epichlorohydrin plant in Hattiesburg, MI. The plant was shut down at the end of 1987 for expansion and modernization. BFG will consolidate the production of Hydrin and Herclor product lines at the plant. BFG is also consolidating the polymer production of its Avon Lake, OH plant with Hattiesburg which will enable the Avon Lake plant to produce other new products.

Goodyear is building a 16 million pound powdered nitrile rubber unit at its chemical plant in Houston, TX. The $6 million investment will provide a domestic source since the company imports powdered nitrile rubber from its chemical subsidiary in LeHavre, France.

Goodyear's $6 million investment in renovating and modernizing an industrial automotive hose and v-belt plant in San Luis Potosi, Mexico has been realized as full production commenced. Goodyear purchased the 64,000 sq. ft. plant from **Goodall Rubber** last year.

Goodyear broke ground for its $320-million radial tire plant in Napanee, Ontario. Work on the 51,200 square meter facility has begun with start-up of production scheduled for early 1990.

Monsanto established an Instruments Service Center at Ta Chung Hua rubber factory in Shanghai. **China Jinshan Associated Trading Corp.** will operate the center that will provide training and support for the various Monsanto instruments throughout the country.

Imperial Adhesives acquired **IPI Adhesives**, Opelika, AL. and the adhesive division of **International Shoe Co.** Imperial acquired the customer lists, processing equipment, formulas and related technology from both companies.

Ansell International acquired the **Granet Division** of **WGM Safety Corp.**, Framingham, MA. Included in the sale was Granet's 80,000 sq. ft. glove manufacturing plant and distribution center in Snow Hill, NC.

Linde AG, West Germany, will acquire the stock of **Scientific Design Co.**, Little Ferry, NJ, a subsidiary of **Mobay Synthetics Corp.** Included in the sale are the worldwide licensing and engineering businesses of SD and their facilities for the manufacturing of catalysts for ethylene oxide, maleic anhydride and other products. In addition, the sales and licensing of butane-based maleic anhydride catalysts developed by Mobay Synthetics (formerly **Denka Chemical**) are part of the transaction. Terms of the agreement were not disclosed.

Du Pont is now offering services of its Engineering Test Center to the industrial community. The ETC is a fully equipped testing facility specializing in thermal analysis, particle characterization and phase equilibrium.

Silcofab, Guelph, Ontario has acquired **Taylor Molding Systems**, Fairport Harbor, OH. TMS has patented and proprietary equipment and process technology related to the manufacturing of precision elastomeric components.

Parker Hannifin completed its acquisition of **Stratoflex, Inc.**, Fort Worth, TX., a manufacturer of hoses and fittings.

Ames Rubber Corp., Hamburg, NJ has completed a financial restructure and issue of $5 million of tax-exempt bonds. The bonds will be used to renovate existing plant buildings in Vernon Township and for the acquisition of machinery and equipment to be used in its manufacturing facilities.

Ethyl Corp. is relocating its **Imi-Tech Corp.** plant in Magnolia, AK. The wholly owned subsidiary produces Solimide foam insulation and the new plant doubles production capacity.

Amoco Performance Products will consolidate its research and development activities at a new suburban Atlanta location. Construction of the 235,000 sq. ft. facility is to be completed by August 1990.

Unichema Chemicals opened a regional sales office in Manalapan, NJ to handle all products produced at its Chicago facility including glycerines, fatty acids and derivatives.

RMA tire report through May (figures in thousands of units)

Passenger tires	YTD '88	YTD '87	% change
Shipments			
original equipment	23,332	24,434	-4.5
radial	19,848	20,650	-3.9
replacement	58,971	56,377	4.6
radial	54,946	49,985	9.9
export	4,121	3,181	88.9
radial	3,599	1,892	90.2
total	86,424	82,992	4.1
radial	78,394	72,527	8.1
Production	74,207	70,009	6.0
radial	67,017	60,834	10.2
Truck & bus tires			
Shipments			
original equipment	3,822	3,367	13.5
radial	2,806	2,368	18.5
replacement	13,133	13,026	0.8
radial	7,597	6,850	10.9
export	1,435	772	85.8
radial	1,122	537	108.9
total	18,390	17,165	7.1
radial	11,525	9,755	18.1
Production	15,514	14,857	4.4
radial	9,411	8,425	11.7

Business Briefs

A group of **Koppers** executives along with **The Sterling Group** as a financial partner, will purchase for $660 million the assets of **Kopper Chemical and Allied Products** business from Koppers which was acquired in June by **Beazer PLC**.

Du Pont will increase worldwide capacity for "Teflon" fluorocarbon resin by 30% over the next five years. Du Pont manufactures fluorocarbon resin at Parkersburg, WV, in the Netherlands and through a joint venture with Mitsui Petrochemical in Japan.

Cookson America, Providence, RI purchased 50% interest in **Heubach, Inc.**, Newark, NJ a manufacturer of specialty color pigments.

Exxon Chemical has initiated design and engineering for a propylene plant at its Notre-Dame-de-Gravenchon site in France. Exxon has begun market development activities based on product imported from the U.S.

General Polymers, a division of **Ashland Chemical**, will open a distribution facility in Toronto to serve the Canadian market.

Cos-Mar Co., a styrene monomer joint venture between **Fina Oil & Chemical** and **Borg-Warner Petrochemicals** will debottleneck its Carville, LA styrene facility by 400 million pounds annually.

Borg-Warner will increase liquid and solid phosphite production by 2.5 million pounds at its Morgantown, WV plant.

ARCO Chemical is constructing a 75 million lbs./yr. butanediol and derivatives facility at its Channelview, TX complex. The company has also initiated engineering studies and feedstock procurement activities for a worldscale propylene oxide plant to be constructed on the U.S. Gulf Coast.

ARCO is also involved in construction of the first propylene oxide/styrene monomer plant to be built in Korea. **Yukong ARCO Chemical**, a joint venture of **Yukong Ltd.** and ARCO is building the plant in Ulsan scheduled to start-up in the first quarter of 1990. Plant capacity will be 100,000 metric tons of PO and 225,000 tons of SM.

ICI Fibres, Harrogate, England, is investing £5 million in technology to produce heavy-decitex nylon 6.6 yarn at the company's Doncaster Works. Production is due to come on-stream in mid-1989 and will be aimed at the rubber reinforcement industry, primarily tires and conveyor belting.

Contracts, licenses

Exxon Chemical and **Japan Synthetic Rubber** signed a joint technology agreement covering ethylene-propylene rubber. Both parties will jointly develop new process technology with the objective of providing products with property advantages over those currently available. Exxon and JSR will consider establishing an EP manufacturing company in Japan to commercialize the technology. The parties have also established an EP supply arrangement. Exxon will produce several JSR EP rubber grades in its plants for JSR sales in the U.S. market and JSR will produce Exxon EP rubbers in its plant for Exxon sales in the Asia Pacific region.

Exxon and **Chevron Chemical** will jointly create an ethylene import system in the Houston area comprising a new terminal, pipeline connections and other facilities related to storage, quality control and distribution.

RMA rubber report through March
(figures in metric tons)

	YTD 1988	YTD 1987	% change
Total new rubber			
New rubber available	1,169,257	1,122,637	4.2
Imports	408,261	390,422	4.6
Exports	193,405	163,388	18.4
Apparent consumption	962.362	950,966	1.2
Total natural rubber			
Imports	308,419	295,954	4.2
Exports	16,334	12,287	32.9
Apparent consumption	291,013	278,916	4.3
Total synthetic rubber			
Production	760,996	734,215	3.9
Imports	99,842	94,468	5.7
Exports	177,071	151,101	17.2
Apparent consumption	671,345	672,046	-.1
Total SBR			
Production	305,427	284,958	7.2
Imports	29,349	28,004	4.8
Exports	64,711	58,508	10.6
Apparent consumption	254,394	260,808	-2.5
Total nitrile			
Production	24,348	23,675	2.9
Imports	5,044	4,586	10.0
Exports	5,567	4,158	33.9
Apparent consumption	23,991	22,493	6.7
Polybutadiene			
Production	131,597	124,780	5.3
Imports	27,334	30,043	-9.0
Exports	23,772	21,066	12.9
Apparent consumption	133,663	131,377	1.7
Ethylene-propylene			
Production	86,813	87,002	-.2
Imports	2,796	2,203	26.9
Exports	19,233	15,933	10.7
Apparent consumption	74,096	68,514	8.2
Butyl, polychloroprene, polyisoprene, silicone and other synthetic elastomers			
Production	212,809	211,800	.5
Imports	35,319	29,632	19.2
Exports	63,788	51,436	24.0
Apparent consumption	185,199	188,856	-1.9